



Untapped Potential for Local Water Security? Opportunities and Challenges for Municipal Type Service Agreements – A Summary Handout

SSHRC Insight Grant
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Research Purpose

To investigate one potential solution to on-reserve water quality and quantity challenges by talking with people.

Personal Rationale

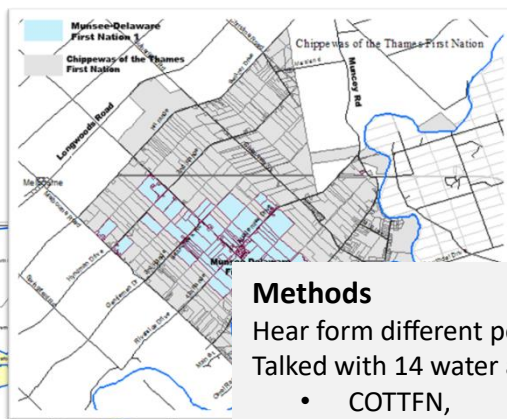
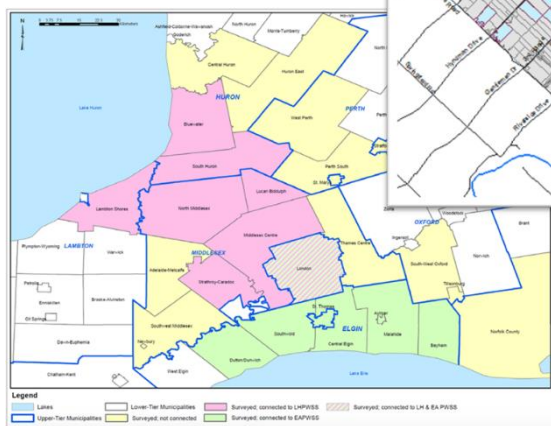
Given the prevalence and severity of on-reserve drinking water issues we need to fully explore the range of solutions and hear from those directly impacted and support their decision-making

Background: We know from past research

- ❖ Municipal Type Service Agreements have benefits (Chris Alcantara)
- ❖ In particular, Water Sharing Agreements
 - Statistical research shows a relationship between water sharing and water quality outcomes (Brady Deaton)
- ❖ If there are benefits to water sharing agreement – Why are First Nations not generally entering into these arrangements?
- ❖ What are we missing in our understanding to paint a full picture of considerations?
- ❖ Let’s go beyond the data and talk to people directly impacted.

With the potential to address water insecurity, why do water actors from either First Nations or Municipalities choose to/not to engage in Municipal Type Service Agreements?

Case Study: Chippewas of the Thames First Nation



Aimed for regional tri-Nation case with CMO and began with COTTFN but COVID limited ability to extend this approach to Munsee-Delaware and Oneida Nation
We adapted research methods

Methods

Hear form different perspectives

Talked with 14 water actors, including:

- COTTFN,
- City of London,
- London Regional Water Authority,
- Ontario Water Works Association, and
- Ontario Ministry of Agricultural Food and Rural Affairs Indigenous Relations Branch.

Summarized findings, identified themes, and perspectives

Table 1: What we heard and learned from 14 actors with different roles.

<p>Perspectives on the potential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing the water capacity constraints on-reserve. • Development of planned projects and thereby economic opportunities on reserve. • Allow for additional housing units on-reserve which allows members to return to the reserve. • Greater certainty for fire suppression on-reserve. • Build stronger working relationships with local municipalities 	<p>Perspectives on concerns and barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liability and associated costs: who is responsible if a drinking water quality event if occurred on reserve? • Water standards: Will federal water guidelines or Provincial water standards apply to the water servicing the Nation? • Infrastructure costs: Who is responsible for the capital infrastructure costs to extend the line? • Political: Election cycles interrupting the decision making on both sides • Compensation policies for water vary from on-reserve to off-reserve. Who's policies prevail? • Reparation policies for residents who can afford water vary from off-reserve to on-reserve. • Relationships, lack of trust and sovereignty for the Nation.
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Considerations for exploring water servicing agreements

- Engage and determine the impact on the Nation and sovereignty over water servicing and distribution
- Engage and determine the impact of additional water capacity on reserve and economic opportunities
- Consider the short-term and long-term interests, impacts and plans
- Consider what the relationship could look like, how it could improve or what challenges the Nation would need to overcome
- Learn from other Nations who have already engaged in water sharing agreements

Some updates and policy changes that alter the landscape

- Federal Government adopted UNDRIP
- Federal Government revoked the Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act and proposed NEW water and wastewater legislation.
- COTTFN has been listed on the Long-Term Drinking Water Advisories list
- Provincial Policy Direction has changed